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NATO ENLARGEMENT—ROUND TWO
PRUDENCE OR FOLLY?

by

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Preface

The genesis of this paper began several years ago while living in Europe at the height of the current NATO expansion period. During four years of extensive traveling throughout Europe I began to see such an endeavor would not only affect the future of United States's and NATO's foreign and defense policies, but could also have a very real and personal impact on me as an Air Force officer. As a result, when the opportunity arose I wanted to better understand the issues and stakes involved in such an important undertaking.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of my Faculty Research Adviser, Lt Col Chuck Costanzo, during this project. His inputs, advice, and first-hand experience in this subject provided a wealth of information and guidance while I sorted through the myriad of issues involved. I also thank my wife, Kim, my friends, colleagues, and international exchange officers at Maxwell AFB, AL, for their comments and discussions during the writing of this paper. Their perspectives and insights helped me better understand the wide range of views represented in this contentious topic and finally settle the issue in my own mind.

Abstract

After the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organization (WTO), the countries of Central and Eastern Europe looked to the West for a new security structure, particularly through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Three of these countries (Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic) have very recently joined the Alliance and NATO is seriously considering a second round of expansion. However, many significant problems must be solved before enlarging the Alliance again. In light of this, NATO should rigorously avoid such a move until these problems are fully resolved and should carefully chart its course through the wake of a restructured defense and security system in Europe.

I found most source material for this project in the Air University Library at Maxwell AFB, AL, along with much other associated material through the Internet. I used materials representing all sides of the debate and from all significant parties involved. Although the debate is still ongoing, my research led me to conclude an additional round of NATO expansion, especially so soon after the first round, would be at best imprudent and at worst irresponsible and foolhardy. Accordingly, I believe another round of NATO enlargement should not be undertaken at all.

Chapter 1

The Wisdom of Further Expansion

Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.

—Matthew 9:17

Introduction

The decision whether or not to expand the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) a second time will determine to a great extent whether the Alliance will continue to live or die. By again inviting more members of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to join, NATO would be making the biggest mission and structural change of its 50-year history. Past Alliance additions certainly had nowhere near the implications current ones do. However, the arguments against further NATO enlargement raise such serious questions about the wisdom of expansion in general and of a second round in particular that ignoring them would imperil the Alliance itself.

Another NATO expansion is ill-advised for a number of reasons which are examined in this paper. Chapter One addresses philosophical and political objections along with the problem of NATO resolve in granting security guarantees. Philosophically, it runs counter to NATO's mission of collective defense and would instead shift focus to collective security missions better left to other structures. Politically, it would violate several basic foreign policy principles and increase NATO and US commitments significantly, all during a drawdown of forces and

resources on the part of most current members. Another expansion into Central and Eastern Europe would also cast widespread doubt on NATO's willingness and resolve to provide credible security guarantees to new members, especially since it includes the possibility of using nuclear weapons.

Chapter Two deals with practical obstacles to expansion which include identifying appropriate candidates for membership and the destabilizing tendencies this might have on non-invitees. The great costs required for enlargement are even more problematic since current members are unwilling to pay for them and prospective members cannot pay. A second round would also greatly increase the demand for Alliance, and especially US, defense commitments to new member states, which would be difficult or impossible to give.

Finally, Chapter Three examines the reaction of the Russian Federation, which should be of particularly grave concern to NATO. It has voiced strong opposition to further expansion of the Alliance and another enlargement would even more directly threaten Russian sovereignty and influence in Central and Eastern Europe than the first round. Expansion would negate the benefits of the NATO/Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security, which has its own limitations and drawbacks for NATO, and would also continue to feed growing Russian distrust of the West. This in turn could seriously impact on-going security and arms control agreements.

Without question the European environment has changed dramatically over the past ten years, suggesting a significant structural change is necessary to provide lasting security. However, the danger comes in adapting an existing framework such as NATO to unnaturally fit a changed situation instead of searching for new, more appropriate solutions. Like new wine in an old wineskin, both may be ruined in the process.

NATO's Purpose

Collective Defense or Collective Security?

When considering the purpose of the North Atlantic Alliance one should note that NATO was originally established as a collective defense organization to protect members against the external threat of Soviet aggression. Collective defense encompasses traditional military alliances such as NATO, where one or more members come to the aid of another member in the event of an attack.¹ All charter and subsequent members of the Alliance, including the most recent three, have held this as one of their most important reasons for joining. Future NATO aspirants also hold this hope since NATO's ultimate purpose is defensive.

Collective security, on the other hand, involves multilateral intervention with consensus of the major powers involved and is directed against international aggression or internal conflict or disorder. This takes several forms, such as mediation and conciliation, economic sanctions, preventive or coercive force deployment, peacekeeping, crisis management, or peace enforcement.² It differs from collective defense in that it must be as inclusive as possible and these structures tend to be ineffectual "talk shops" rather than serious security structures.³

Allied policy makers have recently used the idea of collective security more and more in place of collective defense and the distinction between the two has become blurred. They are now often used interchangeably and many policy makers have only a dim understanding of their differences.⁴ Unfortunately, this misunderstanding threatens to undermine the basic nature of the Alliance and dilute its effectiveness as a collective defense organization. Since the majority of potential conflicts new Alliance members face will most likely come from within, this would

cross the line into collective security and run counter to the Alliance's structure which focuses on external, not internal, threats.⁵

Since 1990 collective security missions have already become increasingly prominent in NATO's actions.⁶ They now clearly occupy NATO's attention, but its collective defense mission continues to remain its primary responsibility until formally renounced or changed by Alliance members. Unfortunately, current enlargement discussions do not even refer to collective defense unless absolutely necessary, primarily because it would antagonize Russia and might dishearten applicants left out of the first round.⁷ The irony is that this is the security assurance many CEE countries are looking for when they ask to join NATO. However, this mission should not be neglected until it is suddenly needed. Otherwise we risk not being prepared if a real threat to the Alliance should arise.⁸

NATO is in grave danger of becoming a collective security organization and no longer an effective collective defense alliance.⁹ Further expansion will increase the potential conflicts and instabilities with which the Alliance would have to deal. Unfortunately, members will be much less likely to fight out-of-area operations since there are no strong incentives for them to fight in disputes not involving their own territory or other vital interests.¹⁰ The Bosnian conflict was a good example since European members were unwilling to get involved without US lead.¹¹

Until this identity crisis is resolved, NATO is likely to end up with the worst of both worlds: a NATO periodically entangled in messy peacekeeping missions that have little relevance to its vital strategic interests and one obligated to protect new members from any potential threat posed by their neighbor, Russia.¹² It does not make sense to fundamentally alter NATO's nature and set it up for possible failure in carrying out its primary mission. Rather, prudence dictates that other security structures should be used to accomplish these new purposes.

While the idea of inclusiveness for Central and Eastern Europe is noble and worth pursuing, using a collective *defense* organization for this is misguided, just as putting new wine in old wineskins and not expecting the wineskins to burst.

Alternatives to NATO expansion

Expansion proponents argue there is no Alliance substitute in European security matters and that NATO must be enlarged to deal with these issues.¹³ However, a strong case can be made that there are in fact existing alternatives which satisfy the same goals NATO expansion is supposed to achieve.¹⁴ Certain characteristics of NATO have made it successful over the past years. These include Alliance cohesion, policies, and the military competence and resolve of its forces, as well as being ready to commit forces and resources to crises as they arise. These are the same areas NATO alternatives should focus on developing.¹⁵

There are clearly some actions which would not prove effective and should be avoided. First, NATO could expand completely and bring Russia into the Alliance, but this would leave little of NATO's original purpose and mission.¹⁶ NATO could also delete the Article 5 commitment to defend other members. This would reduce the danger of being dragged unwillingly into a war, but would turn the Alliance into a conditional defense pact. NATO could also tell CEE countries to forget NATO membership and focus instead on getting into the EU to hopefully be accompanied by rapid EU expansion. However, quick EU expansion is unlikely and this would not solve the problem of a future resurgent Russian threat.¹⁷ Other ineffective alternatives include strengthening the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), already a European-wide organization, or building the Partnership for Peace (PfP) into a more serious program.¹⁸ However, the main problem with these approaches is that they are too broad-based and are not adequate to firmly and cohesively deal with tough security challenges.¹⁹

The most promising suggestions center around placing greater reliance on currently-existing security organizations. European allies could take a greater role in security matters with the United States still actively engaged and lending its full weight and combat support.²⁰ An enhanced Western European Union (WEU) might be a promising alternative, with emphasis on the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) and the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) initiatives.²¹ Through changes in coordinating and command mechanisms between NATO and the WEU, the United States could keep a role and voice in European security affairs and continue to lend support and influence without detracting from NATO's first responsibility.

ESDI has already shown some promise for a growing European role in security matters.²² Its essential elements (such as assets, capabilities, and command structures) are designed to make ESDI truly effective and more than just a paper organization. Furthermore, greater NATO and WEU coordination concerning ESDI is already occurring.²³ The CJTF also holds promise for new NATO missions within the WEU context without the need for further Alliance expansion.²⁴ Although more planning tool than organization, the CJTF gives NATO greater flexibility in a world of more diverse threats. It also aims to develop better crisis response while helping the WEU develop a European-led capability under ESDI.²⁵ With such initiatives, NATO expansion is unnecessary since the objective of European security has already been addressed.

Several obstacles remain, though, before the WEU, ESDI, or the CJTF become true replacements for NATO action. These are the areas where NATO members should concentrate their efforts, not on expansion. The biggest drawback to the WEU is that it is not currently attractive to prospective NATO members since it failed earlier to address the Bosnian situation.²⁶ ESDI also has detractors who fear it will undercut American engagement by signaling a substantial capability for Europe to act alone.²⁷ Finally, embedding the CJTF concept within

NATO is a long-term effort with long-term solutions to become the basis for NATO military activities and resources.²⁸

Although not insurmountable, these efforts require substantial work and cooperation to make them fully capable of replacing NATO action. However, for the sake of the Alliance, this is an effort well worth making. If NATO members devoted the same time, effort, money, and other resources to these organizations as they are devoting to changing the Alliance structure, they would create a more effective security architecture able to deal with the myriad of security problems facing Europe without having to dilute NATO's effectiveness.

The Wisdom of Expansion

Foreign Policy Principles

Several strong arguments against further Alliance expansion revolve around the conduct of sound foreign policy. Further enlargement violates a number of principles of good international relations and ignores many of the realities of European international politics and deterrence.²⁹ For example, in 1996 during his tenure as Secretary of Defense, William Perry outlined several fundamental principles of NATO enlargement. They are:

1. Potential members must be prepared to defend the Alliance and have the professional military forces to do it.
2. NATO must continue to work by consensus—new members must respect this tradition and abide by it.
3. Military forces of new members must be capable of operating effectively with NATO forces. This means not only a common doctrine, but interoperable equipment—especially communications equipment.
4. Potential new members must uphold democracy and free enterprise, respect human rights inside their borders, and must respect sovereignty outside their borders.
5. Their military forces must be under democratic, civilian control.³⁰

Unfortunately, even these seemingly straightforward principles raise questions the Alliance has been hard-pressed to answer up to now and most likely will not be able to fully solve even in the long-term. On closer scrutiny, the problems they raise become even more readily apparent.

Concerning the first and third principles, aspirants are generally ill-equipped to add serious defensive capabilities to the Alliance, at least in the short- to mid-term. Some may be able to handle small-scale conflicts and many have even contributed forces to UN and PfP efforts. However, they are not yet in a position to provide a realistic capability to defend other Alliance members nor will they likely be in such a position for many years to come. Also, until issues of interoperability and modernization have been worked out, they would not be able to work effectively with NATO members, even if they had the requisite robust combat capabilities.

For the second principle, another tremendous challenge to NATO would be to maintain its consensus with the addition of new members, particularly when they are so diverse and have so many competing interests. Since NATO is no longer a one-concern organization (i.e., deterring and defending against a Soviet threat), it now has the freedom to concentrate on other security problems. Unfortunately, there is only limited agreement in the Alliance on security objectives outside the normal NATO collective defense scope of action.³¹ This situation is not likely to change in the near future, especially with the addition of new members. Furthermore, many feel the Alliance no longer even has a clear mission at all and there is no real consensus between the Allies on additional expansion.³² Instead of making Europe more stable, many feel expansion may actually create the insecurity it is trying to eliminate.³³

The fourth principle has little likelihood of being universally adhered to. Some CEE countries have poor records on human rights and respecting the sovereignty of other countries.³⁴

More alarmingly, misinterpretations have already arisen over what NATO membership means. For example, some Hungarian policy makers think NATO membership means Hungary can “protect” with impunity the interests of ethnic Hungarians outside its own borders.³⁵ There is also widespread suspicion that recent Hungarian-Romanian rapprochement (such as the 1996 bilateral Treaty of Understanding, Cooperation, and Good Neighborliness) was primarily a result of the two countries’ desires to impress NATO and may be more cosmetic than substantive.³⁶ NATO membership has unfortunately also done little or nothing to substantially quell long-standing tensions between member countries, evidenced by ongoing territorial disagreements between Turkey and Greece.³⁷

Regarding the last principle, it is doubtful expansion will really advance the cause of democracy since many of these states are already democratic or on their way to establishing fully functioning democracies. Although the Administration has promised to foster democracy and market growth along with spreading security,³⁸ these promises are much harder to fulfill than they appear. History has also shown the Alliance does not consistently follow its own guidelines, since it does not require states to actually be democratic before they join as long as they are of strategic value to the Alliance. Past inclusion of Portugal, Greece, and Turkey are good examples.³⁹ Finally, we must focus not only on the civilian control aspect of this principle, but also support the corresponding democratic structures undergirding that civilian leadership.⁴⁰

Two other problems stand out as well. First, although most Alliance members support European integration and hope expansion will promote political and economic stability in the region, further NATO expansion would only create a new dividing line in Europe. Proponents hope expansion will help make progress toward European integration. Unfortunately, in their quest to make Europe “whole,” proponents fail to realize Europe has never been “whole.”⁴¹

Second, NATO hopefuls generally value the collective defense aspects of the Alliance. However, with few exceptions, they are currently more concerned with the economic and democratic benefits of NATO membership than with security from an outside threat, especially when one does not appear to be on the horizon. For many of them NATO membership is only an interim surrogate for their real goal of economic development.⁴² There is also concern that prospective members will use NATO to raise their standard of living without incurring the associated costs of alliance membership.⁴³ Prospective members see integration with NATO first as the way out of their economic distress and if there is to be another division in Europe, many CEE countries want to be firmly entrenched in the West. Without question, NATO needs stability and predictability to its east. But at its heart NATO is a military alliance organized for defense against aggression and was not created to solve economic problems. The EU, not NATO, is the proper organization for this since it is a political and economic body.⁴⁴

There is no crisis in Eastern Europe that requires quick solutions to these problems and NATO should take its time to fully consider implications of the first expansion round. In the rush to enlarge again, though, Western legislators are stampeding into unwise decisions. The US Senate has expressed its concern, particularly for fiscal costs, and issued guidelines to the President on various aspects of future considerations.⁴⁵ Russia, of course, also wants NATO to pause before considering another round.⁴⁶ In the final analysis, prudence dictates that the effects of that initial round should be evaluated carefully before a second round is seriously considered.

Implications for the United States

In assessing the consequences of NATO expansion for the United States, it is clear there are no geopolitical or compelling strategic interests at stake. Rather, one of the biggest driving forces is simply political concern for the democratization of CEE states. This can almost be

characterized as “social work” foreign policy.⁴⁷ The focus has been almost exclusively on democracy in CEE without any real review for strategic policy implications. Proponents claim the United States has gone to war for Europe twice and that we cannot turn our backs now. However, they have misread the implications of those wars, which involved the major European powers and vital US interests, and instead want to expand for non-vital interests (i.e., the smaller states of CEE).⁴⁸ In reality, CEE countries have always been a second priority for the United States after Western Europe and we have never gone to war over this area.⁴⁹ In the end, the Administration has not fully counted the cost or laid out clear goals for NATO expansion. It must decide its strategic vital interests and outline its foreign policy in this regard.⁵⁰

Domestic politics have played a role in policy making as well. During the first round expansion period, US ethnic groups representing the CEE states exerted a sizable lobby in Congress and particularly with the Administration.⁵¹ Policy makers from some of those states also expressed sentiment for a “moral” need to include these states due to their experiences in World War II.⁵² NATO decision makers, especially those in the United States, can expect this type of lobbying to continue and need to be able to sift through those arguments which have merit from a legitimate security standpoint and those which play on emotion or feelings of guilt.

There has been remarkably little debate over expansion, especially for such an important event. In fact, the US pledge to expand came before an Alliance decision had even been discussed.⁵³ Domestically, to create more debate and answer many of these questions, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee submitted a letter to President Clinton in June 1997 underscoring their belief expansion would create a new dividing line in Europe.⁵⁴ A group of fifty US foreign policy experts (comprised of former senators, retired military officers, diplomats, and

academicians) also sent an open letter to the President outlining their opposition to expansion. Unfortunately, the Administration's response still left many questions unanswered.⁵⁵

In assessing the need for further expansion, regardless of NATO's future path a few things remain clear. First, the United States needs to stay engaged in the process. Senator Richard Lugar warned that unless Washington provides a solution for the problems of the European states, "they will ultimately seek to deal with these problems either in new alliances or on their own."⁵⁶ This is especially important since the future direction of European security will directly impact our own. Second, we must continue to fully support our treaty obligations and not let those obligations significantly change without the full and informed consent of all parties involved.⁵⁷ We should not turn our backs on that commitment, but instead ensure it does not lose effectiveness and capacity for action defending Alliance members. Last, we should keep in mind any further expansion of the Alliance would change its entire nature, much as adding a first child changes a family's nature.⁵⁸ In light of such important changes, the next NATO Strategic Concept and Summit meeting in April 1999 in Washington, D.C., will be a critical next step for the Alliance, for "it will define the NATO of the 21st century."⁵⁹

Security Guarantees for New Members

At the heart of the question of security guarantees is whether or not NATO could or would defend second round aspirants and thus maintain its credibility in the world's eyes. The short answer is "no"—it cannot defend them credibly against a determined aggressor. The requirements and distances involved in an effective defense would simply be too great to be feasible. Proponents concede expansion will affect current defense plans but assert NATO could still defend new members even with the pledge not to deploy troops to new members' territories.

However, this assumes current and planned NATO capabilities as well as its resolve are sufficient to honor the Article 5 guarantee. It also assumes new members would be able to make a significant contribution to their own defense in the framework of an Alliance operation. These are faulty assumptions, as I will show later, and should not be used in consideration of granting something as critical as a full, including nuclear, security guarantee to another nation.

The United States has been successful in past conflicts as a security guarantor, not necessarily because it is a superpower, but because in those cases it backed up what it said it would do. However, prospective members have justified doubts about whether the United States and its allies can and will back up what they are now saying. There is little enthusiasm in NATO or Western publics at large to extend the Article 5 umbrella to new members, particularly given the risk of nuclear employment, and prospective members are well aware of this reluctance.⁶⁰

The most serious question is whether the Alliance would actually use nuclear weapons to protect second round invitees, not to mention first round ones. Would it really be willing to use nuclear weapons to protect one of those countries if necessary? What vital interests are involved that would make NATO use them?⁶¹ To risk nuclear war when a vital interest is not at stake would be irrational. Furthermore, if NATO is not prepared to use them when it is necessary, what business does it have of extending to a new member the guarantee on paper that it would?

Aspiring NATO members know a nuclear umbrella gives them security conventional weapons cannot. However, the question of nuclear weapons has been glossed over by the current Alliance “three no’s” policy: NATO has “no intention, no plan, and no reason” to deploy such weapons on the territory of any new member either now or in the future.⁶² The Alliance did not want this politically volatile question to bog down the expansion initiative and so chose not to pledge in writing anything more than these somewhat vague assurances. However, the

discussion cannot be put off much longer. Plans and intentions can be changed at a moment's notice, as Russia continues to note.⁶³ NATO needs to decide now if and how it will involve first round members and any second round invitees in the nuclear planning process (that is, if they are to be full members and not members in name only). In particular, how would they fit into the nuclear planning process? Such a consideration raises the important question of whether or not new members would have veto power over the NATO nuclear powers. All current members need to have firm agreement in this area for nuclear deterrence to remain effective.

We may already be in an untenable position since the Administration has declared they are now weapons of "last resort" and will not deploy to new members' territories. This raises the question of whether or not we have the commitment to use them and leaves us only two choices in a potential conflict: either NATO guarantees are just so much paper or it should build up its conventional forces and return to the doctrine of first use for nuclear weapons.⁶⁴ In the end the question of NATO expansion is not about politics or feelings—it is all about NATO's purpose to deter aggression by possibly using military force, including the ultimate force if necessary.

In the final analysis, another round of NATO expansion is unwise for several important reasons. It would change the very nature of the North Atlantic Alliance's collective defense structure to one of collective security, which is unnecessary since other organizations already exist which could more appropriately take on that responsibility. Further expansion violates several common sense principles of international security and raises significant implications for the United States. Finally, additional enlargement would force the Alliance to try to provide security guarantees to new members which cannot be feasibly or realistically honored and would thus damage NATO's credibility. All these reasons point to the logical decision to forego another round of expansion.

Notes

¹ Article 5 of the 1949 North Atlantic Treaty states “The Parties agree that an armed attack against one or more of them . . . shall be considered an attack against them all; and consequently they agree that, if such an armed attack occurs, each of them . . . will assist the Party or Parties so attacked by taking forthwith . . . such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force, to restore and maintain the security of the North Atlantic area.” The “attack against all” is the standard operative phrase of collective defense alliance treaties. Michael G. Roskin, “NATO: The Strange Alliance Getting Stranger,” *Parameters*, Summer 1998, 30-31.

² Many people apply the term “collective security” to any alliance, including NATO. However, collective security was originally conceived as an alternative to alliances for collective defense. Its purpose is to build and uphold a sense of solidarity and shared responsibility in matters affecting international peace and security, not to protect against external attack as in collective defense. David S. Yost, “The New NATO and Collective Security,” *Survival* 40, no. 2 (Summer 1998), 137.

³ The League of Nations and the United Nations are classic examples. See Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry, eds., *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 17.

⁴ Unfortunately, the emerging view of NATO’s responsibility has become something of a hybrid between a traditional alliance and a collective security organization. President Clinton has stated, “It will become an alliance no longer directed against a hostile bloc of nations, but instead designed to advance the security of every state in Europe—NATO’s old members, new members, and nonmembers alike.” This reflects a dangerous conceptual muddle between these two very different security structures. Carpenter and Conry, 17-18.

⁵ Although many of the former communist states obviously face serious internal challenges, NATO is a military alliance that derives its meaning from the existence of an outside aggressor, not angry factions within individual states. Doug Bandow, “Europe’s Unhealthy Security Dependence,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 213-214.

⁶ This new focus has centered on responding to internal instabilities and out-of-area operations, a major change from its first forty years. Bloc confrontation has been replaced by diffuse conflict scenarios, with all the risks they entail, which are multifaceted and multidirectional and—most significantly—difficult to predict and assess. Jason Arnold and Samuel Grier, “NATO Enlargement: Issues and Answers,” *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1998, 72.

⁷ NATO has promoted collective security concepts for various reasons, including the diplomatic advantages for relations with states offended by—or not likely to be included in—its continuing collective defense mission. Yost, 138.

⁸ While the Alliance has multiple functions, its core function of collective defense continues to be paramount for the existing Allies and for prospective new Allies such as Poland. One of the greatest challenges facing the Alliance today is to clarify the relationship between its long-standing core function of collective defense and its new missions. *Ibid.*, 135.

⁹ It is well on its way to admitting virtually all European nations, which would make it essentially the same as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Carpenter and Conry, 17-18.

Notes

¹⁰ Joseph Lepgold, "NATO's Post-Cold War Collective Action Problem," *International Security* 23, no. 1 (Summer 1998), 78-79. See also Henning Sorensen, "NATO and Its New Military Security Position," *European Security* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1998), 75.

¹¹ Europeans have come to rely on the United States over the years, since they know America will bear intervention costs much more readily than they will. Bandow, 217-218. See also Alexander A.C. Gerry, "Eurasian Security in an Era of NATO Enlargement," *The Officer*, October 1997, 24, and Owen Harries, "The Errors of Expansive Realism," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 192.

¹² Carpenter and Conry, 17-18.

¹³ Gerald B. Solomon, "Blessings of Liberty: A Wider NATO and Soon," *The Officer*, August 1996, 28. European allies generally recognize this to be true, including France. President Chirac, during a 1996 speech to a joint session of Congress after the Dayton accords, proclaimed that "NATO simply doesn't work without American leadership." Ronald Tiersky, "French Military Reform and NATO Restructuring," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1997, 101. Jaromir Novotny, Chief for International Relations for the Czech Republic Ministry of Defense, also claimed "NATO proved to be the only robust institution capable of successfully addressing security threats in Europe." Gerry, 21.

¹⁴ Jonathan G. Clarke, "A Strong OSCE for a Secure Europe," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 225-226.

¹⁵ According to Javier Solana, NATO Secretary General, "NATO is the only framework that combines the three key elements of successful security management. Only NATO combines transatlantic cohesion, proactive policies and military competence. And it does so in a framework that is not static, but dynamic." Javier Solana, "Preparing NATO For The 21st Century," *The Officer*, November 1998, 33.

¹⁶ For NATO to absorb all CEE states and Russia would require both a transformation of Russia (which remains unlikely for the foreseeable future) and of NATO. But such a NATO would not retain its current character as a military alliance with integrated commands. A NATO which includes Russia would resemble today's collective-security body, the OSCE, more than it resembles the West's current integrated military alliance and collective defense arrangement. Gary L. Geipel and Robert A. Manning, "Rethinking the Transatlantic Partnership—Security and Economics in a New Era," *The Officer*, September 1996, 39.

¹⁷ Ronald Steel, "Beyond NATO," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 249.

¹⁸ Jonathan Dean, "NATO Enlargement: Coping with Act II," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 124.

¹⁹ Although one of OSCE's advantages is that it includes all NATO, Warsaw Pact, and former Soviet republic members, this is also one of its biggest disadvantages, since the "operate by consensus" mode allows members to block discussion and unified action. Clarke, 228-229. In addition, the PfP is not designed to effectively fight in true combat situations. It has fostered greater military cooperation and consultation among its 43 member nations (including Russia), and has enabled those nations to exercise and to deploy on peacekeeping operations together.

Notes

But these have primarily been outside of the major conflict resolution arena. Although it has operated relatively well in Bosnia, its resolve has never been fully tested. George A. Joulwan, "The New Shape of the Atlantic Alliance," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1997, 61. It is merely a halfway house, created to avoid alliance guarantees that might anger Russia. Hugh De Santis, "NATO's Manifest Destiny: The Risks of Expansion," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 160.

²⁰ They also should retain NATO's command structure, interoperability of equipment, shared procurement programs, sharing of intelligence, joint training, and combined operations. Clarke, 223.

²¹ Steel, 249. The WEU has similar responsibilities to NATO which could be more fully developed, especially as an alternative European security architecture to respond to the changed circumstances in Europe. Although it has no permanent forces currently assigned, except for a planning cell, its role as the bridge between NATO and the EU is growing. Graham Messervy-Whiting, "WEU Operational Development," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1997, 74. There is also now a greater need for an independent WEU in NATO, because of an increasing desire to reflect the collective interests of Europe and its growing economic and political strength. See Lluís Maria de Puig, "The European Security and Defense Identity Within NATO," *NATO Review WEBEDITION*, no. 2, Summer 1998, 6-9; on-line, Internet, 8 January 1999, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1998/9802-03.htm>.

²² It is an integrated European structure and has been called the "free-standing pillar" of Europe. The French have long favored it as an alternative to the US-dominated NATO, and it is now showing a greater German role as well. American officials now accept the idea of ESDI and greater European decision-making in general. In addition, the five-nation Eurocorps, along with the European Maritime Force, European Force, and other efforts demonstrate a desire to move beyond agreement and field real capabilities. Charles L. Barry, "Creating a European Security and Defense Identity," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1997, 62-65.

²³ Essential elements of the ESDI formula endorsed by Alliance leaders in Madrid include NATO's full support to make available NATO assets and capabilities for WEU operations; providing for the support of WEU-led operations as an element of the CJTF concept; provision within the future new command structure for European command arrangements able to prepare, support, command and conduct WEU-led operations; commitment to full transparency between NATO and WEU in crisis management, including through joint consultations; and involving the WEU in NATO's defense planning processes. de Puig, 6-9. There have also been other numerous signs of growing relations between the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers in Europe (SHAPE) and the WEU, which have further strengthened ESDI's legitimacy as well as its structure. Joulwan, 61.

²⁴ At a June 1996 meeting in Berlin, France agreed to the creation of ESDI inside NATO and the United States agreed to both afford it adequate visibility within the Alliance and establish procedures for realizing a capability for WEU use in the near term. At present, CJTF is progressing toward implementation through planning, exercises, and trials under three NATO commands. Barry, 67.

²⁵ It is also more suited to non-Article 5 peace operations than combat, and has more flexibility than traditional forces. The CJTF program rests on the premise that to perform crisis

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prevention, peacekeeping, and humanitarian aid operations, which are likely to be in areas adjacent to NATO states, NATO members need forces that are more flexibly assembled and used than those that were arrayed against the former Warsaw Pact. Further, it is now assumed that CJTFs, which PfP members can also join, will become NATO's normal way of running non-Article 5 operations. Leggold, 99. See also Barry, 67.

²⁶ As a result, CEE aspirants to NATO still want US involvement as part of any agreement they join. Gerry, 24.

²⁷ The United States might then use ESDI as a pretext for further reducing its presence in Europe. Tied to this is the European (and American) aversion to risking action where success is not guaranteed. To field ESDI, both cautions must be overcome. Exercises, defense investments, and working closely with the United States are still required. Barry, 65.

²⁸ Ibid., 67.

²⁹ Carpenter and Conry, 24. The Defense and Security Committee of the North Atlantic Assembly also outlines just a few of these arguments, including warnings against drawing a new dividing line between East and West, the risk of provoking Russia, the difficulty in drawing up and politically sustaining objective criteria for new membership, the lack of enthusiasm in NATO to extend Article 5 guarantees to new members, and the strong potential of bringing into NATO new international instabilities such as unresolved minority and ethnic problems. Vyacheslav A. Nikonov, "Transatlantic Security: Beyond NATO," *The Officer*, August 1996, 29.

³⁰ Gerald B. Solomon, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-1997: Blessings of Liberty*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1998), 160. Deputy Secretary of Defense John White also offered four similar principles of NATO membership. See John P. White, "Preventive Defense—Key To Contemporary Defense and Foreign Policy," *The Officer*, September 1996, 30.

³¹ James Golden asserts, "Agreement on security objectives—one basic criterion for measuring performance—drops off rapidly . . . as soon as issues that go beyond traditional military concerns within Europe and the North Atlantic are raised. NATO agreement on strategy is similarly limited. The main elements of NATO strategy—flexible response, collective response, forward defense, indefinite duration of conflict—although useful as a broad framework for common action, nevertheless leave enough ambiguity and enough latitude for separately-designed national programs so that the framework provides only limited help in assessing the 'efficiency' of national efforts." James R. Golden, *NATO Burden-Sharing: Risks and Opportunities*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1983), vi.

³² Owen Harries asserts "to this day, there is no such consensus [on interests, purposes, and means of NATO expansion], and no coherent case for NATO expansion on which all of its principal supporters agree." Harries, 189. In addition, others go so far as to claim the United States basically stumbled into its NATO policy and, in essence, and has ignored the realities of security in the world. The Administration has "unwisely pressed its less-than-enthusiastic security partners to open the Alliance's doors to the post-Soviet states. . . . Most worrisome are the . . . image of unipolarity and the underlying narcissistic belief that the post-Cold War world is a reflection of American values. By refusing to see the world as it really is, the United States is blinding itself to the potentially destabilizing consequences of NATO enlargement and their adverse effects on American interests." de Santis, 159.

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³³ Jonathan Dean warns against expansion when he states, “the NATO enlargement project is designed to prevent a repetition of the situation that led to two world wars—the existence of a belt of small, weak East European states caught between competing major powers. But the enlargement project may well create the very situation it is intended to prevent: quarrels between two power blocs over weak buffer states.” Dean, 123. For a further discussion on the Alliance’s dilution of its long-standing “forward defense” and “flexible response” doctrines, see William G. Hyland, “NATO’s Incredible Shrinking Defense,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 34-35.

³⁴ For example, Hungary has problems on three of its borders with ethnic Hungarians living in other countries, and often tries to interfere with governmental policies in these countries. The 1920 Treaty of Trianon gave 72 percent of pre-World War I Hungary, with 64 percent of its population, to Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Romania. During World War II Hungary, a German ally, temporarily regained part of its lost kingdom. Although there are currently no claims to change any borders, “Hungary is still concerned about ethnic Magyars in Slovakia, Transylvania, and Vojvodina [Serbia]. . . . Of all NATO members, Hungary would have by far the biggest ethnic and border problems with neighboring countries, and it would be precisely the hardest country for NATO to defend.” See Roskin, 35-36.

³⁵ One Hungarian defense ministry official noted, “NATO membership does not mean giving up our national interests. On the contrary, it means an opportunity to assert national interests.” Deputy State Secretary Istvan Gyarmati of the Ministry of Defense has been even more direct, commenting that “opportunities to enforce our interest will increase” and calling for an “international response . . . if Hungarian minorities in neighboring countries are threatened.” See Barbara Conry, “New Problems for NATO: Potential Conflicts Involving the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 89.

³⁶ Bandow, 90.

³⁷ Barbara Conry points out “the Greek-Turkish animosity has deep historical roots and is continually stoked by actual or perceived slights, periodic crises, and other manifestations of ongoing tension. Each side points to very old grievances to justify its hostility toward the other, and any provocation has the potential to erupt into war. Unfortunately, that pattern is replicated throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Hungary, a first-round NATO invitee, has similarly long-standing problems with several of its neighbors, and prospective second- or third-round NATO candidates have even more age-old grievances. Decades of NATO membership have not had a measurable impact on the Greek-Turkish relationship, and it would be foolhardy to assume that the alliance would have a greater pacifying effect on incoming NATO members.” Conry, 87-88.

³⁸ The line goes that enlargement is necessary to prevent re-nationalization, and will keep states with vital interests from fighting each other by bringing them all into one big family. See Stephen J. Blank, “Rhetoric and Reality in NATO Enlargement,” in *European Security and NATO Enlargement: A View From Central Europe*, ed. Stephen J. Blank (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, April 1998), 34.

³⁹ James Chace asserts, “The Clinton administration portrays the Western alliance as a means of ensuring that countries within the alliance remain free-market democracies. Yet that

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was certainly not the primary aim of the old NATO. On the contrary, NATO during the Cold War was a military alliance that sometimes took in members with less than sterling democratic credentials because of their strategic value. Portugal, for example, had long been a dictatorship when it joined NATO in 1949 and remained so until the mid-1970s. Neither Greece nor Turkey was a model of democracy at the time of accession, but they were strategically valuable real estate.” See James Chace, “A Strategy to Unite Rather Than Divide Europe,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 179-180.

⁴⁰ Stanley Kober reminds us that the focus should be on reforming governments, and avoiding dictators, which is the reason for focusing on democratic processes. “The confusion is evident in the Administration’s insistence that countries entering NATO have civilians in control of the armed forces. Although civilian control of the armed forces is preferable to an uncontrolled military establishment, it does not provide much of a restraint on dictatorial wars. Adolf Hitler, after all, was a civilian.” Stanley Kober, “James Madison vs. Madeleine Albright: The Debate Over Collective Security,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 257-258. For a discussion on the military’s influence on recent political events in Turkey, see *Ibid.*, 261.

⁴¹ To be so, NATO would have to include Russia. In that case, what is the point of a collective defense structure in Europe? Owen Harries asks, “When was the last time Europe was ‘whole?’ It never has been. And then there is the simple and undeniable fact that at every step of the way—and regardless of how many tranches of new members are taken in—the actual strategic dividing line will be moved to a different place. Only if and when Russia is fully included in whatever arrangement is still called ‘NATO’ will Europe be whole. . . . But if that inclusion were ever to take place, what would be the point of the alliance?” Harries, 196-197.

⁴² In fact, opinion polls in the main candidate countries show higher public interest in EU membership than in membership in NATO. Dean, 124.

⁴³ For example, Hungarian support for NATO has centered on integration into the EU and its economic well-being. It is no secret that “many Hungarians are dissatisfied with their present economic situation. The only way out, as they see it, lies in assistance from their economically prosperous West European neighbors.” Svetlana Sukhova, “Europe Will Help Us,” *Sevodnya*, 18 November 1997, 4, in CDPSP XLIX, no. 46, 17 December 1997, 21.

⁴⁴ Unfortunately, the EU is presently sidetracked with currency integration issues, among other things, so NATO has received the pleas for help. John Gaddis contends, “the sources of insecurity in Europe these days lie more in the economic than the military realm: disparities in living standards divide the continent, not armies or ideologies. But the EU, the obvious instrument for dealing with these difficulties, has come down with its own form of theateritis, the single-minded push to achieve a single currency among its existing members by the end of this decade. So it has been left to NATO to try to reintegrate and stabilize Europe as a whole, which is roughly comparable to using a monkey wrench to repair a computer. The results will no doubt be striking, but perhaps not in the ways intended.” John L. Gaddis, “History, Grand Strategy and NATO Enlargement,” *Survival* 40, no. 1 (Spring 1998), 146-147.

⁴⁵ See “Voting for the Senate Resolution on NATO Expansion,” *Arms Control Today*, April 1998, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm> and “The Senate Resolution on NATO Expansion,”

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Arms Control Today, April 1998, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>.

⁴⁶ Alexander Lopushinsky, a senior Russian official at the Russian Embassy in Bonn, Germany, stated, "This pause is appropriate in any event, since a prolonged period will be required for NATO to absorb three new members and assess the impact of further enlargement on the effectiveness of the Alliance." Alexander Lopushinsky, "Russia and NATO," *The Officer*, April 1998, 36. See also Dean, 124, and James H. Anderson, "Regional Strategies: Europe," *The Officer*, August 1998, 32.

⁴⁷ A State Department talking paper, presented to an April 1997 conference, indicates the United States is not enlarging NATO for geopolitical reasons, since no visible compelling strategic interest is at stake. According to Stephen Blank, "NATO enlargement is a democratization policy which, to go by President Clinton's campaign speeches of 1996 and other major statements, will provide the stability needed for greater economic development in Central and Eastern Europe that will generate new trade and jobs at home. NATO is not merely an exercise in preventive diplomacy and deterrence as before." Michael Mandlebaum, a stern critic of enlargement and of US policy in general, goes so far as to call it "foreign policy as social work." See Blank, 15.

⁴⁸ According to Carpenter, "not every conflict that has erupted in Europe, or is likely to in the future, has wider strategic implications. There is no validity to the notion that limited struggles, especially those involving small powers in peripheral regions, are destined to escalate to continental conflagrations that will drag in the United States." Carpenter and Conry, 8.

⁴⁹ Alan Tonelson explains, "the United States has never gone to war in Europe because Central or Eastern Europe was being threatened. Throughout the 20th century—save for Woodrow Wilson's ill-fated intervention in the Russian civil war—American leaders have always distinguished between the nation's vital interests in Western Europe and its secondary interests to the east." Alan Tonelson, "NATO Expansion: The Triumph of Policy Incoherence," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 48-49.

⁵⁰ In fact, our government has been divided and lacking in unity on the issue of the implications of expansion. In April 1997, during the original expansion consideration period, Secretary of Defense William Cohen testified to the Senate Armed Services Committee that NATO would have no internal focus to concentrate on collective security interests. He categorically rejected any NATO role in domestic disputes, saying that "an internal dispute is something that NATO would not be engaged in." However, within hours of his testimony, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright publicly stated that NATO's focus would, in fact, be primarily on internal threats to stability and order within member countries. Eugene J. Carroll, Jr., "NATO Enlargement: To What End?" in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 202.

⁵¹ Owen Harries relates that votes—particularly Polish-American, along with others—played a significant role in influencing the Administration policy approach to NATO expansion. "To ensure that it was fully appreciated, in 1991 a lobbying group called the Central and East European Coalition was formed; it claimed to comprise 19 national membership-based organizations representing 22 million Americans with ethnic roots in 13 countries of Central and Eastern Europe." Harries, 190-191.

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⁵² Also important was the “moral” pressure exerted by East European leaders, especially Vaclav Havel, who claimed the moral superiority of those who had suffered under Communism. He called on the West to “redeem itself” by making NATO a “genuinely pan-European security structure.” Ibid., 190-191.

⁵³ Blank argues that “NATO enlargement is the product of an admittedly incomplete and abbreviated, presidential, and personality-driven US policy process. It developed outside of, and evidently without, a regular bureaucratic process of strategic review.” As James Goldgeier adds, “No formal decision by the President and his top advisers about a timetable or process for expansion occurred until long after Clinton had started saying that NATO would enlarge.” Enlargement is not being sold on the basis of strategic interests, but rather on the basis of democratization, political stability, collective security, and even trade. Blank, 13.

⁵⁴ Specifically, they wrote to President Clinton arguing that “the decision to extend NATO security guarantees required ‘far more debate and circumspection,’ despite the 1995 NATO Enlargement Study and the 1997 Pentagon Report to the Congress on the rationale for and costs of enlargement.” They then identified a series of typical questions from those opposed to enlargement for the Administration to answer. Annette Just and Porter J. Goss, “Ratification of NATO Enlargement,” *European Security* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 1. See also “The Debate Over NATO Expansion,” *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home.htm>.

⁵⁵ Stanley Resor, “Opposition to NATO Expansion,” *Arms Control Association Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home.htm>.

⁵⁶ NATO is good for the United States, the argument goes, because “it gives the United States not only a continued military presence in Europe but also (so policymakers believe) political leverage over Europe. . . . Thus NATO is now being assessed less for its ability to hold back the Russians than for its utility in reining in the allies. Some US officials [such as Lugar] have been disarmingly specific about that.” Steel, 247. Furthermore, Central and Eastern Europeans continue to argue that NATO is “the only robust institution capable of successfully addressing security threats in Europe.” See Gerry, 21.

⁵⁷ It has often been said that “NATO was created to bring the Americans in, keep the Russians out, and keep the Germans down. Whatever the purpose, the Vandenberg Resolution of June 11, 1948, opened the door to the treaty negotiations and eventually permitted the United States to join an ‘entangling’ alliance for the first time since the American Revolution.” See Hyland, 31-32.

⁵⁸ Steel points out, “to move from being a couple to being a family is not only a change of size. The whole entity is transformed. The full consequences of the decision are only dimly glimpsed at the time, and mostly ignored. Focusing on the expansion issue alone, as if it did not affect everything else about the purpose and the value of the alliance, is easy. It gives the debate an air of deceptive simplicity.” Steel, 243.

⁵⁹ Arild Isegg, “Report to CIOR Congress: Overview of NATO’s Current Agenda,” *The Officer*, September 1998, 32.

⁶⁰ Nikonov, 29.

⁶¹ Alexander Lopushinsky has asked, “From what and whom is NATO going to defend Poland, the Czech Republic or Hungary? What are the risks that make it necessary to protect

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these states with a nuclear umbrella? There are no answers to these rhetorical questions.” Lopushinsky, 35.

⁶² Jacquelyn K. Davis, Charles M. Perry, and Andrew C. Winner, “The Looming Alliance Debate Over Nuclear Weapons,” *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1997, 80-81.

⁶³ See Carpenter and Conry, 23. Further, Davis argues that “while the decision to skirt the issue of nuclear weapons was tactically astute, the reality is that many factors make it unlikely that Alliance members can avoid a more explicit discussion of the fundamental question of nuclear deterrence and its place in NATO strategy for much longer. . . . More importantly, we also risk the effects that avoiding a timely debate could have on an enlarged Alliance. It will be important to show new members that NATO can step up to the plate and handle difficult questions such as nuclear deterrence in a way that preserves Alliance cohesion as well as the security of individual members.” Davis, 81-86.

⁶⁴ William Hyland asserts that, in either case, “NATO expansion is a very hazardous and dangerous project.” Hyland, 37-38.

Chapter 2

Troublesome Practicalities Of Additional Expansion

A nation has neither permanent enemies nor friends, only permanent interests.

—Charles de Gaulle

Major Issues Involved

Potential new candidates

One of the major issues NATO would have to resolve would be to identify appropriate candidates for another expansion round. Hans Binnendijk has identified four groups: ¹ 1) Romania and Slovenia; 2) former neutrals such as Austria, Sweden, and Finland; 3) Balkan nations such as Bulgaria, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Albania; and 4) the Baltic Republics. The July 1996 Congressional NATO Enlargement Facilitation Act added Moldova, Ukraine, and the countries of the Caucasus region as potential new members.² However, for various reasons these countries all make troublesome invitees for a second round of NATO expansion.

Romania and Slovenia were strong contenders in the first round of expansion,³ but are still not good second-round candidates for the reasons stated in Chapter One. In addition, although neither borders the Russian Federation and Russia would not necessarily react violently to their inclusion in another expansion round, Moscow would undoubtedly protest and would probably demonstrate its non-support through other security agreement areas.⁴ Including these

countries would also raise questions about how NATO could realistically defend them against an aggressor. This is especially true for Romania, which would require NATO to overcome tough logistical problems and great distances to mount a defense on their behalf.⁵

Former neutrals might be admitted if they become convinced neutrality within the new Europe is not possible. However, this is still under great debate within these countries and runs counter to their long-standing desires for neutrality. Furthermore, Balkan states such as Bulgaria and Albania may need a decade or longer to prepare for membership.⁶ Last, including the former Soviet republics of Moldova, Ukraine, and those of the Caucasus region would definitely cause a violent reaction from Moscow and are presently well removed from consideration for the next round of NATO expansion. Because of this, I will not discuss these countries' prospects here.

However, the Baltic Republics are also under strong consideration for a NATO invitation. Unfortunately, their inclusion would raise especially strident objections from Russia. Although they have made significant economic and political progress, their status as former Soviet republics would create such a negative reaction in Russia that overall security would not be helped by NATO their membership.⁷ Furthermore, of all possible candidates, the Baltics are probably the most militarily indefensible. It would be suicide for NATO to attempt to protect them and the rest of CEE militarily in the event of an actual conflict.⁸ Unfortunately, this does nothing to assuage Baltic fears of a resurgent Russian threat, but the nature of Russian power politics in the region makes that a sad reality for the Baltic republics.⁹

Destabilizing effects on others

President Clinton made it clear from the beginning of the NATO expansion process he wants to push for another round of enlargement. From this cue, Secretary Albright began to make public statements to the effect that no country would be excluded "because of where it sits

on the map.”¹⁰ However, as Henry Kissinger observed recently, NATO expansion serves merely to move the dividing line of Europe eastward by 300 miles.¹¹

The result will be to still separate the “ins” from the “outs” in terms of Western security guarantees with the possibility of adding to the instability of the “outs.” In the fall of 1996, the three Baltic presidents warned the West that vague promises of NATO membership might actually de-stabilize them.¹² Since the Alliance cannot provide a realistic defense of the Baltic republics if they are attacked, this possibility of destabilization is further reason not to give indefensible security guarantees. It is also possible that additional countries in the “gray” area between the first enlargement and Russia could suffer instability, especially through friction and potential conflict with their big power neighbor—Russia. Finally, a good example concerns Hungary and Romania. Since Hungary has joined, if Romania is not offered membership in another enlargement round the potential for friction between the two is very real.¹³

Vyacheslav Nikonov, the head of the Russian delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly, has argued against the apparent open discrimination between those offered membership and those not.¹⁴ While this is a decidedly Russian view designed to oppose NATO expansion, he still makes a good point. The real issue, however, is not what side of the line a particular country is on, but whether it needs NATO protection and whether NATO could actually protect it if necessary. NATO enlargement and Russian relations should not be held hostage by each other.¹⁵ Finally, even if a country meets the criteria, NATO can still deny them membership. For some countries, this leaves membership dependent on a great deal of subjectivity from current Alliance partners, which in itself leads to uncertainty and potential destabilization.

The CEE perspective also provides troublesome viewpoints. First, there is little consensus between CEE publics and their policy makers on NATO membership. In general,

policy makers do not seem to really care about the opinions of their people and there is usually no public debate on the topic.¹⁶ They are pushing for NATO membership, but the public in general is more cautious to commit to another military alliance, especially following the oppressiveness of the Soviet-dominated WTO.¹⁷ CEE publics tend to favor European economic and political integration over military integration. In their eyes NATO membership provides regional cooperation and identity to CEE states and is ultimately a means to the end of EU integration.¹⁸ Last, many countries have a legitimate desire for protection against a resurgent Russia, but since that threat seems to have subsided somewhat, this desire has been temporarily subordinated to the shorter-term goal of building their economies. In the end, however, it will always remain an area of concern based on the past history of Russian regional hegemony.¹⁹

Costs of Expansion

The burden sharing dilemma

Alliance members have demonstrated a notable lack of cohesion in their attitudes toward continued burden sharing within NATO.²⁰ Unfortunately, in light of the changed strategic environment, it is unlikely the Allies will continue to make the same necessary investments in their militaries or in the Alliance. Indeed, many members have made it clear they have no intention of underwriting the costs of further expansion, believing the United States pushed it on them.²¹ Thus, if the Alliance does expand again, there is the danger of one or more of them letting other members, particularly the United States, shoulder a disproportionate share of the costs. In the end, resolving burden sharing equitably in such a disparate organization is probably impossible. There are too many temptations for some current or prospective members to decline

support or to offer other types of “contributions” such as basing or transit rights rather than committing forces or money.²²

Czech President Vaclav Havel has said Central Europe rightfully deserves to join Europe and NATO membership is an important cultural and spiritual symbol to that end. Unfortunately, symbols are not enough; they require a commitment of resources few NATO members are willing or even able to make.²³ Bringing the CEE countries to the same level of modernization as the current members will be very costly, especially as more members are added. However, one of the biggest problems of further NATO expansion is that NATO is making another huge commitment of resources while cutting back on its own defensive capabilities.

Unfortunately, several of our major Allies made it clear after the Madrid Summit they are either not interested in paying or cannot pay for NATO enlargement.²⁴ This is partly because the United States primarily championed the expansion effort and so our allies view it as a US-led effort, since America already absorbs the largest share of additional costs in Alliance matters.²⁵ It is almost certain NATO expansion will precipitate bitter disagreement over burden sharing among the allies. However, in light of our own defense reductions, it is unlikely either the American people or Congress would tolerate significant increases in the US share of Alliance spending.²⁶ Unfortunately, either the United States will end up paying most expansion costs or NATO will be saddled with second-class militaries well into the next century.²⁷

In addition, the whole problem of resource allocation for further expansion has been neglected from the beginning. Article 7 of the 1997 Madrid Declaration only lightly addresses the subject. It fails to identify specifically how the resources for this effort are to be allocated and also makes several dangerous assumptions in the process.²⁸ First, it assumes the Alliance will provide the resources even though the major powers have stated they will not pay. It also

assumes costs will be kept to a minimum, as if huge undertakings like this routinely fall under budget, and that the European security environment will remain stable, keeping costs low. Finally, it apparently plans to fully assess the costs *after* the decision to enlarge has been made, not *before*. Taken together, these elements are a recipe for potential disaster.

It is also impossible to assume the CEE countries alone would be able to absorb the costs of expansion. They have already begun their own cutbacks in many defense spending areas and public opinion polls from the three first round invitees indicate all are opposed to spending greater amounts on defense budgets.²⁹ Czech defense expenditures are running at one-fifth those of Czechoslovakia in the late 1980s and the defense budgets of Hungary and Poland have taken similar cuts (one-sixth and one-fifth, respectively).³⁰ Since Hungary and the Czech Republic in particular have publicly announced their specific cutbacks, they may become at least partial “free riders” in the expansion effort, which would create resentment among current members and provide the Alliance more reason not to expand again.³¹

Assessing costs becomes even more difficult when expense estimates differ so widely. A 1996 Congressional Budget Office study estimated it would be close to \$125 billion by the year 2012.³² The US Administration’s estimate was lower with approximately \$30 billion over the next 12 years.³³ The lowest was an estimate NATO ministers accepted in December 1997 of approximately \$1.5 billion over ten years for common funded military requirements associated with NATO enlargement.³⁴ Whichever figure is accurate is rather academic though, for once the costs reach billions of dollars, the number of countries which can take on those costs is reduced to one—the United States. However, even Administration officials know the American public will not tolerate a large share of enlargement costs, especially during our own drawdown.³⁵ As a

result, if NATO again expands the only alternative the Alliance has is to accept that such an expanded NATO will be less adequate militarily than NATO in its current form.

Growing US commitments

Money is not the only commitment the United States would have to make. Another cost would be greatly increased security commitments. Senator Lugar has said there can be no security at the center if there is none at the periphery of the European “circle.” But where does the outer edge of the circle stop?³⁶ The more NATO expands, the more it must be prepared to provide defense and support to new members and the greater the potential it will be brought into internal conflicts and collective security dilemmas. Since the United States is the dominant Alliance partner and the only member having the proven resolve to take action in these thorny areas, it will directly impact our own forces and missions. Furthermore, unless NATO focuses on the hard practicalities of holding the Alliance together, we risk overextending our resources and basing our expansion simply on sentimentalism and emotionalism.³⁷ The Defense Department has recently been increasingly desperate for personnel and resources to carry out its added missions and has already started to suffer readiness and retention problems as a result. It is disingenuous to assume we can readily absorb more missions without directly impacting current and more vital security missions.

Another critical question is whether the enlargement of NATO security commitments to non-vital areas is important enough to risk US or Allied servicemembers’ lives. President Clinton has stated his willingness to risk those lives,³⁸ but has not given adequate answers as to why or how that would serve US vital strategic interests. The sad truth is there really are not any vital US or NATO strategic interests in Central and Eastern Europe—at least none justifying a full pledge of NATO armed forces, including nuclear weapons.³⁹ Expansion advocates insist it

will foster cooperation, consolidate democracy, and promote stability through Europe. But in reality it will establish expensive, dangerous, unnecessary, and probably unsustainable security obligations for NATO.⁴⁰

The practical obstacles of attempting another round of NATO expansion are simply too great to be overcome realistically. It is hard enough to try to select new candidates acceptable to all parties across the board without inadvertently destabilizing those not selected for NATO membership. More important, the costs of expanding NATO again are too great to be sustained by its members or potential candidates. Until NATO can objectively assess and overcome these serious obstacles to its expansion, it must delay further enlargement which would threaten its existence as an effective collective defense alliance.

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¹ Hans Binnendijk, "NATO, European Security, and Beyond," *Joint Force Quarterly*, Spring 1997, 56.

² Gerald B. Solomon, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-1997: Blessings of Liberty*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1998), 99-100.

³ Before the 1997 Madrid summit, France made a concerted push to include Romania and Slovenia in the first round of expansion. There was even concern that France would withhold approval of the three invitees, but President Chirac finally yielded when he was satisfied Romania and Slovenia would be top candidates for future membership. Wade Boese, "NATO Issues Three Invitations; Signs Separate Charter With Ukraine," *North Atlantic Treaty Organization Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home.htm>.

⁴ Jonathan Dean, "NATO Enlargement: Coping with Act II," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 123.

⁵ William Hyland goes so far as to assert, "recent proposals to include Slovenia and Romania, to assume the defense of those areas, which would further enlarge NATO's defense frontiers, are truly ludicrous." William G. Hyland, "NATO's Incredible Shrinking Defense," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 37.

⁶ Binnendijk, 56.

⁷ Russia has made it absolutely clear that it considers unacceptable the admission to NATO of any former Soviet republic and that such a move would render the Founding Act a dead letter. Consequently, if the United States were to press to bring the Baltics into NATO, it is almost certain that our major European allies would not support that stark a challenge to Moscow. See

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Question 2 of “The Debate Over NATO Expansion,” *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home.htm>.

⁸ Even the Wehrmacht in World War II could not do it with superior forces than those NATO would have. If NATO were to expand to include the three Baltic states, the situation “would be even worse. Defense of the long frontier running from Tallinn to Budapest is well beyond NATO’s capabilities. (That was roughly the line defended by the German *Wehrmacht* in late 1944 with five army groups; the defense of the Vistula alone involved almost 1 million men.). In the Baltic region, NATO would confront Russian troops directly across the border. Without the deployment of substantial NATO forces, all three Baltic republics could easily be overrun.” Hyland, 36-37.

⁹ As Estonian Foreign Minister Toomas Ilves aptly stated, “If Russia didn’t threaten us, we’d have better things to do.” Stanley Kober, “Russia’s Search for Identity,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 134.

¹⁰ This was an obvious reference to the Baltics. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry, eds., *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 23.

¹¹ According to Kissinger, states seeking membership “are seeking to participate in NATO for reasons quite the opposite of what the Founding Act describes—not to erase dividing lines but to position themselves inside a guaranteed territory by shifting the existing NATO boundaries some 300 miles to the east.” Eugene J. Carroll, Jr., “NATO Enlargement: To What End?” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 201.

¹² Peter van Ham, “The Baltic States and *Zwischeneuropa*: ‘Geography Is Destiny’?” in *International Relations* XIV, no. 2 (August 1998), 51.

¹³ Barbara Conry asserts, “Romania’s exclusion from the first round of NATO enlargement may create a backlash. Such a backlash—a setback in Romanian political liberalization or the election of a more nationalist government—could easily cause a resurgence in tensions between Hungary and Romania.” Barbara Conry, “New Problems for NATO: Potential Conflicts Involving the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 90.

¹⁴ He warned against a “continent divided into the members of one bloc, with the right to greater security, and non-members, who have a right to less security and cannot feel comfortable in this situation.” He further states, “the principal defect of the NATO enlargement in Central and Eastern Europe is in its open discrimination and its orientation toward an ‘unequal security’ concept. The ‘club’ principle of direct entry for the chosen ones creates a basis for dividing states and peoples into ‘clean’ and ‘unclean’ categories.” Vyacheslav A. Nikonov, “Transatlantic Security: Beyond NATO,” *The Officer*, August 1996, 27.

¹⁵ Gerald B. Solomon, “Blessings of Liberty: A Wider NATO and Soon,” *The Officer*, August 1996, 28.

¹⁶ The rift between Eastern European constituencies and their leading elites on NATO integration is “genuine and problematic. The people seek participation in policy-making and favor more responsiveness by their governments to popular concerns. . . . Elites, on the other hand, tend to ignore public views and to pursue policies they consider appropriate. . . . Their lack of responsiveness to public needs bodes unfavorably for the internal democratization of the

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region, lately marked by apathy and disengagement from politics.” Georgeta V. Pourchot, “NATO Enlargement and Democracy in Eastern Europe,” *European Security* 6, no. 4 (Winter 1997), 164-169.

¹⁷ Even Matyas Ersi, a State Secretary in Hungary’s Foreign Ministry, was forced to admit that “many people have doubts about whether we ought to ‘hand ourselves over’ to another bloc after the Warsaw Pact.” Svetlana Sukhova, “Europe Will Help Us,” *Sevodnya*, 18 November 1997, 4, in CDPSP XLIX, no. 46, 17 December 1997, 21.

¹⁸ For example, “uneasiness about integration in Western military structures was most visible when publics were offered a choice. Asked whether they preferred to integrate into military as compared to non-military structures, most respondents chose the EU, the OSCE, or neutrality over joining NATO. . . . In 1996, more publics favored the EU over NATO across all the countries under discussion except for Poland.” Pourchot, 164.

¹⁹ Central and East European countries do not view NATO in exclusively military terms. There are indications that several governments “consider inclusion in the alliance important evidence that their nations are finally and irrevocably part of ‘the West.’ Some of these countries may also see NATO membership as a way of entering other important Western institutions—especially the European Union with all its economic benefits—through the back door. Nevertheless, the core objective of the countries seeking NATO membership is unambiguous: they want the protection of the alliance’s security guarantees.” Carpenter and Conry, 19.

²⁰ This is all the more troublesome since the burden sharing generally demonstrated by the Alliance is a gauge of its members’ willingness to contribute to the collective good of the organization. The United States has always borne the greater share of these burdens, but has accepted that role as a superpower with greater global commitments. James R. Golden, *NATO Burden-Sharing: Risks and Opportunities* (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1983), 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Michael G. Roskin, “NATO: The Strange Alliance Getting Stranger,” *Parameters*, Summer 1998, 30.

²⁴ The leaders of Britain, France and Germany declared after the Madrid summit either that they do not intend to pay for NATO expansion or that they expect their defense budgets to shrink. See “The Debate . . .” Question 6. France went so far as to assert it would not pay a single franc. President Chirac made this assertion within hours of the decision at the Madrid summit in July to expand the alliance. Carpenter and Conry, 1-3.

²⁵ West Europeans have stated privately, and sometimes publicly, that NATO enlargement is primarily a US initiative and that Washington should therefore pay for it. *Ibid.*, 1-3. Unfortunately, past precedents support this view. Ron Steel observes, “West European governments like it [US involvement] because it means an American subsidy of their defense. They can chop away happily at their military budgets, as they have been doing, knowing that in a pinch the Americans will fish them out of trouble. . . . No wonder everyone wants to join.” Ronald Steel, “Beyond NATO,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 246.

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²⁶ James, Chace, "A Strategy to Unite Rather Than Divide Europe," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, ed. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 181.

²⁷ See "The Debate . . ." Question 6.

²⁸ Article 7 addresses costs only by stating, "Admitting new members will entail resource implications for the Alliance. It will involve the Alliance providing the resources which enlargement will necessarily require. . . . We are confident that, in line with the security environment of the Europe of today, Alliance costs associated with the integration of new members will be manageable and that the resources necessary to meet those costs will be provided." Solomon, "The NATO Enlargement Debate . . ." 145.

²⁹ This is especially true since they are under pressure from the International Monetary Fund to reduce their budget deficits. Jason Arnold and Samuel Grier, "NATO Enlargement: Issues and Answers," *Airpower Journal*, Summer 1998, 76, and Carpenter and Conry, 1-3.

³⁰ "The Debate . . ." Question 7. Furthermore, Question 8 goes on to assert "the administration is, at best, unrealistic when it claims that the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which have much larger economic and social needs [than the major Western European nations], can make additional investments in defense without damage." "The Debate . . ." Question 8.

³¹ The Czech Republic has already announced its own military downsizing. In addition, political leaders in Hungary are faced with powerful opposition to increased military spending and calls for a referendum on NATO. Consequently, "Czechs and Hungarians are likely to become 'free riders' in NATO, which will place greater economic burdens on the United States and the West European allies. That is bound to raise the hackles of the public in NATO member countries and, no matter who ends up subsidizing the new members, reduce the prospect of a second round of enlargement any time soon." Hugh De Santis, "NATO's Manifest Destiny: The Risks of Expansion," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 164-165.

³² Subsequent RAND Corporation and Pentagon studies have produced far lower figures, but those calculations are based on the assumption that Europe's security environment will remain quiescent for at least the next 15 years. They further assume that an enlarged NATO can meet its obligations merely by upgrading Central European defenses and by creating a small rapid-reaction force. But "there is no guarantee that Europe's strategic environment will remain placid for 15 years. One need only recall how different that environment looked 15 years ago to appreciate how rapidly radical transformations can occur." Carpenter and Conry, 1-3.

³³ Of this \$30 billion, the United States would supposedly pay less than 10 percent, even though the US share of Alliance spending is at about the 60% level. See Golden, 28, and Binnendijk, 56.

³⁴ This figure was based on results of a ground analysis performed by SHAPE which estimated Alliance requirements for integrating and defending the three invited nations. The NATO figure is lower than the estimate in the February DoD report, supposedly because NATO found military infrastructure in these nations to be in better shape than expected. Henry H. Shelton, "Posture Statement: Report to the US Senate Armed Services Committee," in *ACSC Joint Operations and Campaign Concepts Coursebook 7*, January 1998, 22.

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³⁵ This is the primary reason Secretary of State Madeleine Albright asserted at a Senate hearing in May 1997 that “NATO enlargement is not a scholarship program” and that new members would have to pay for the modernization of their militaries to meet Western standards. If that is the case, since Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic are unable to bear the burden alone, any future members certainly will not be able to bear their share of costs, if they are allowed to join the Alliance. Chace, 181.

³⁶ This logic perfectly illustrates “imperial overstretch”—it ensures an exhausting proliferation of security commitments. After all, “if the United States, through NATO, must guard against internal instability and interstate security competition not only in Western Europe but in areas that could infect Western Europe, where will NATO’s responsibilities end? . . . Must not NATO, then, expand even farther eastward and southward than is currently proposed?” If the Alliance holds to Senator Lugar’s logic, the ostensible threats to American security will be nearly endless. Benjamin Schwarz, “NATO Enlargement and the Inevitable Costs of the American Empire,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 80-81.

³⁷ What we are seeing, then, is “a kind of selective sentimentalism. The historic plight of some peoples moves us more than does that of others, despite the fact that they all have compelling claims as victims. Emotionalism, but of a surprisingly elitist character, appears to be at work here. . . . I *am* suggesting, though, that on NATO enlargement, emotions at the top do appear to have combined with a disregard for advice coming up from below.” John L. Gaddis, “History, Grand Strategy and NATO Enlargement,” *Survival* 40, no. 1 (Spring 1998), 149.

³⁸ “The Debate . . .” Question 4. It is important to remember that NATO involves a commitment to go to war. The President himself told West Point that NATO was extending its “most solemn security pledge,” which meant that they “could be asked to put [their] lives on the line for a new NATO member.” Doug Bandow, “Europe’s Unhealthy Security Dependence,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 211. President Clinton has also acknowledged it would require the same forces guaranteed [to] the West Europeans during the Cold War. “Enlargement requires that we extend to new members our Alliance’s most solemn security pledge, to treat an attack against one as an attack against all. We have always made the pledge credible through the deployment of our troops and the deterrence of our nuclear weapons.” Carpenter and Conry, 27-28.

³⁹ For American interests, “what matters in Europe is the conduct of the handful of major powers. As long as those states remain at peace with one another, and no menacing would-be hegemonic power emerges, there is no credible danger to America’s security. Events involving small countries in Central and Eastern Europe may create annoyances, but they will not affect European stability or the overall configuration of power on the Continent.” *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴⁰ Carpenter and Conry, 1.

Chapter 3

Russia's Security Concerns

Any extension of the zone of NATO is unacceptable.

—Mikhail S. Gorbachev, 1990

Threats to Russian Sovereignty and Influence

Without question, enlargement advocates should be most concerned about NATO's relationship with Russia. The future course of Russia's political and economic development and its relations with the West, especially as NATO looks eastward, need to be at the top of the Allies' agenda. This is not to say NATO should bow to Russian desires, particularly if they stand between NATO and its vital interests. However, we should not consider any Alliance plan to expand eastward without fully considering the impact on Russia.

George Kennan, father of the US containment policy, asserted expansion would be the most fateful error we could make.¹ Europe's long-term interests are served by cooperation with Russia; however, to Russians NATO expansion is aimed directly at them.² Moscow opposed the first round of enlargement but was unable to prevent it, especially with so many domestic problems of its own.³ However, a second round would come directly into the Russians' "backyard." NATO would be wise to not expand a military alliance so close to Russia's borders. Rather, we should help Russia develop a strong democracy and not undercut its efforts or aid the cause of Russian nationalists with another round of expansion.⁴

The lessons of history urge us to treat Russia carefully following the demise of the Soviet Union.⁵ John Gaddis states certain foreign policy principles have been proven by history and are so basic they almost do not need to be stated: “treat former enemies magnanimously; do not take on unnecessary new ones; keep the big picture in view; balance ends and means; avoid emotion and isolation in making decisions; be willing to acknowledge error. Unfortunately, further NATO enlargement manages to violate every one of these principles.”⁶

The Alliance has at least partially recognized the importance of including Russia in its European security structure by negotiating the NATO/Russia Founding Act which gives Russia a voice in European security. However, if the Alliance presses on with an additional round of enlargement, such an act would threaten to unravel this security arrangement. On the other hand, if we accept the status quo and do not attempt to incorporate more CEE countries into the Alliance but rather turn to other existing security arrangements, we might actually make the Founding Act successful over the long term.⁷

Practicalities of the NATO-Russia Founding Act

Merits and benefits

The Founding Act, signed by NATO and Russia in Paris in May 1997, was a sound idea on its own merits. Although conflicting US and Russian interpretations partially undermine its value, it is still worthwhile to establish better communication between NATO and Russia. The Act defines many mechanisms for consultation and cooperation⁸ and was designed to offset the negative impact of NATO’s first round expansion. It was a wise move since Russian relations with NATO are fundamental to European security and define Russia’s relations with the West,

and it has been praised by leaders on all sides of the agreement.⁹ According to supporters, it outlines a new strategic NATO/Russian partnership and its signing in Paris signaled a turning point in the post-Cold War world. Even detractors acknowledge NATO's most recent expansion could not have worked without Russia's consultation and cooperation, however grudging.¹⁰

The Act serves as a framework for common approaches and solutions to common problems. It establishes a Permanent Joint Council to maintain effective communication and cooperation¹¹ and assures Russian participation in European security. Already the Joint Council has undertaken discussion on a variety of issues, many of which have met with some success.¹² Russia has made good use of this new relationship and is using it as a mechanism to ensure NATO will not be anti-Russian. It also gives Russia influence in the NATO planning process and helps it maintain involvement in issues of importance to the Russian Federation.¹³

Limitations and drawbacks

However, the Act raises several troublesome problems. There are significant disagreements over the interpretation of the Act, particularly over the role of Russia's participation and what it means exactly. NATO has said Russia has a "voice but no veto" in the process,¹⁴ but the Russian view is that their participation gives them exactly that—an explicit right to veto any Alliance decision or action.¹⁵ The reality is, whether or not it has a veto, Russia now has significant influence in NATO. It will without question use the Joint Council consensus process to exert influence on Alliance members or even to delay further expansion.¹⁶

In addition, another significant problem with Russian participation in the Alliance is that it greatly complicates and delays the NATO decision-making process. Russia is now involved in almost all Alliance planning, potentially even that which might directly challenge its hegemony and influence in Central and Eastern Europe.¹⁷ It defies logic to see how an alliance can include

its former and still potential adversary in its planning and decision-making process without bringing about either its demise or complete dilution of its effectiveness as a collective defense structure.¹⁸ Although greater cooperation and consultation with Russia is a desirable goal NATO cannot ignore, it must realize that it will completely change the focus of its primary mission and thus its very nature.

Finally, a third problem is in the Founding Act itself. Many, such as former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger,¹⁹ view it as a NATO concession to Russia over concern for its reaction to NATO expansion, an expansion supposedly engineered precisely to protect against a possible resurgent Russian threat. At issue is the desire to placate Russia but still maintain an effective military alliance, with the result that we are sending mixed and confusing signals. On one hand, with further expansion we would be at their doorstep. On the other hand, through the Act we have indicated to Russia we are apparently unwilling to use the necessary force to stand against it should it threaten its neighbors.²⁰ We treat Russia as both friend and foe. As former Senator Sam Nunn asked, how can we tell the CEE countries we will protect them and also tell Russia we are not a military threat, especially as the borders of NATO get closer to their own?²¹ In our zeal to get closer to Russia we have focused on the wrong mechanisms. There is good reason the Act has been called a “tactical success” for a “strategic danger.”²²

Growing Russian Distrust of the West

One can hardly blame Russians for their opposition to further expansion. They see enlargement for what it is: expansion of a military alliance directed potentially (indeed most likely) against them. In their view, the West is exploiting their weakened state, and they resent the treatment they perceive to be getting from the international community.²³ Instead of

becoming what former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev thought was America's "strategic partner," they have become the junior partner or are not even considered at all.²⁴ Furthermore, they remain distrustful of US policy makers²⁵ and their suspicions of the West in general have continued. As a result, their national security policy labels enlargement a direct "threat" to Russian security.²⁶ They see European concerns as simply directed against a hypothetical threat and the call for common security rings hollow in their ears.²⁷

Russian resentment and re-emergent nationalism

Russian leaders have spoken out with wide-ranging viewpoints—all opposing expansion.²⁸ They assert they were misled by early NATO commitments not to expand, a concession which was very important to them. In fact, Gorbachev would not have agreed to German reunification if it had not been for the strong assurances he received during the Two-plus-Four negotiations that NATO would not move east.²⁹ They also rue the fact they did not get these assurances in writing, adding they "will not be fooled again" by the West. Leading Russian nationalists, such as Alexander Lebed, have been particularly vocal on this issue, and have used it to gain popular support across Russia.³⁰ This perception is partly because there is no real Russian influence or lobby in US government or policy-making bodies. As a result, they cannot influence US decision-making processes and claim our policies are driven only by short-term political considerations.³¹

The most hostile reaction has come from the Russian elite who are more attuned to the activities and sensitivities of the international arena. Not surprisingly, this reaction emerged shortly after President Clinton unveiled his surprise announcement on NATO enlargement while on a trip to Eastern Europe.³² This elite has a growing perception the West, and especially the United States, is trying to isolate Russia, weaken it militarily, and reduce it to the status of a

colonial outpost of the industrialized West.³³ They assert NATO has not shown how expansion serves the greater interests of Europe and Russia and are concerned NATO is trying to isolate Russia or marginalize its role in Europe.³⁴

The Russian populace in general also thinks expansion is unjust and views it as Russia withdrawing from Europe and NATO filling the void.³⁵ Although many Russians are indifferent to NATO expansion due to their significant personal difficulties in simply making ends meet, there is still evidence of growing resentment, mostly directed against America.³⁶ All this does little to allay Russia's distrust of NATO's and the United States's motives in expansion. As a result, Russian public opinion is becoming more anti-American and many Russians are still bitter about it.³⁷ NATO, and the United States in particular, must be careful not to further exacerbate this growing attitude. The last thing the Alliance needs is for the Russian population, not just its policy makers, to set itself against future Alliance actions.

Russian-Western security and disarmament agreements

This entire process has had a decided impact on joint security cooperation. Enlargement has damaged Western-Russian relations by backing Russia into a corner and making it feel helpless in the face of Western enlargement.³⁸ Unfortunately, many other issues concerning global security besides NATO expansion are at stake and this current disagreement threatens to derail many of those initiatives.³⁹ One of the most important is the ratification of START II. In the wake of the first round of NATO expansion, the Russian Duma has delayed ratification of this treaty and will undoubtedly kill it completely if NATO goes through with another enlargement round.⁴⁰ In addition to continuing friction with Russia, NATO expansion will also likely impede Russian cooperation on other valuable arms control projects.⁴¹

Russia could also (and has already started to) build greater ties to other regional actors, such as China, India, Iraq, and Iran.⁴² NATO should take notice of this development, primarily due to the possible ramifications a shifting security arrangement between Russia and one of these other countries could have on other unstable parts of the world. One such example in this regard would be for Russia to reduce its troops on the Sino-Russian border and allow China to actively pursue its other territorial claims (such as Taiwan and the Spratley Islands).⁴³

Finally, this continuing friction could affect Russian armed forces' restructuring. Russia is currently downsizing its forces, but this could be interrupted if Moscow feels threatened.⁴⁴ There is also the strong possibility Russia will re-evaluate its policy on nuclear weapons in order to put even greater reliance on them to ensure its ability to counter NATO action.⁴⁵ In the end, the West would do well to remember that how Russia ends up in the new European security structure is likely the most important security consideration in Europe for the next few years.⁴⁶

Fortunately, no immediate threat is on the horizon. The ghost of the Soviet Union does not presently overshadow Russia's armed forces which are ineffective, demoralized, and facing major reductions.⁴⁷ However, NATO is still coming to grips with what the demise of the Soviet Union means for its own future, and it will eventually have to reconcile its collective defense obligations and the collective security actions in which it currently finds itself enmeshed.

In sum, there are several good reasons the Alliance should not expand its borders a second time. Expansion could directly raise Western threats, either actual or perceived, to Russian sovereignty. It would risk invalidating any gains accomplished through the Founding Act, which itself has many drawbacks and pitfalls. Furthermore, it would seriously inflame already resurgent Russian resentment against the West and could play into the hands of nationalists in Russia. Finally, another round of enlargement would without question jeopardize

ongoing security negotiations and agreements between NATO and Russia. The Alliance must ask the hard question of whether another round of expansion is indeed worth the price it would have to pay in these other areas.

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¹ Enlargement would inflame “the nationalistic, anti-Western and militaristic tendencies in Russian opinion,” and the Russian public and government would react by looking outside the West for “guarantees of a secure and peaceful future for themselves.” Furthermore, “East-West relations should not be centered on who is allied against whom.” Gerald B. Solomon, *The NATO Enlargement Debate, 1990-1997: Blessings of Liberty*, (Washington, D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 1998), 124. See also Eugene J. Carroll, Jr., “NATO Enlargement: To What End?” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 205.

² Carroll also observes, “our long-term interests in Europe can best be served by the existence of a stable, peaceful order in Europe that includes cooperative participation by Russia. If we want to make a friend of Russia, we cannot treat Russians as enemies. At its heart, NATO expansion is aimed at Russia, and proceeding on this road creates the strong possibility that our actions will produce the very outcome we least desire.” *Ibid.*, 205.

³ Miroslav N. Jovanovic, “Does Eastern Enlargement Mean the End of The European Union?” *International Relations* XIV, no. 1 (April 1998), 28-29.

⁴ There are many members of the Russian political elite who “want to turn the clock back to the good old days when the Soviet Union had a powerful military and political voice in Europe. The humiliation of being forced to accept the expansion of NATO will stimulate their resentment and strengthen their resistance to Yeltsin’s efforts to continue democratic reform.” Carroll, 204-205.

⁵ To do otherwise ignores history and follows the wrong examples. Having personally witnessed the bad treatment of Germany and Russia after World War I and the good treatment of Germany and Japan following World War II, Sir Winston Churchill chose as one of the “morals” of his great history of the Second World War: “In Victory: Magnanimity.” See John L. Gaddis, “History, Grand Strategy and NATO Enlargement,” *Survival* 40, no. 1 (Spring 1998), 146.

⁶ As Gaddis put it, “Perhaps that is why historians—normally so contentious—are in uncharacteristic agreement: with remarkably few exceptions, they see NATO enlargement as ill-conceived, ill-timed, and above all ill-suited to the realities of the post-Cold War world. Indeed, I can recall no other moment in my own experience as a practicing historian at which there was less support, within the community of historians, for an announced policy position.” *Ibid.*, 145.

⁷ Jonathan Dean, “NATO Enlargement: Coping with Act II,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 121. See also Owen Harries, “The Errors of Expansive Realism,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 197.

⁸ For a full discussion of these mechanisms, see Jack Mendelsohn, “The NATO Russian Founding Act,” *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>.

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⁹ President Clinton said it marked “an historic change in the relationship between NATO and Russia.” French President Chirac stated it opened a “new chapter in the history of Europe, a chapter without precedent in that it expresses a common vision of the future.” Even Russian President Yeltsin agreed the Act “will protect Europe and the world from a new confrontation and will become the foundation for a new, fair and stable partnership, a partnership which takes into account the security interests of each and every signatory to this document.” Ibid., n.p. Russian Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev further stated, “the NATO-Russia Founding Act provides extensive opportunities for creating an atmosphere of trust.” Igor Sergeyev, “We Are Not Adversaries, We Are Partners,” *NATO Review WEBEDITION*, no. 1, Spring 1998, 15-18; on-line, Internet, 8 January 1999, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1998/9801-04.htm>.

¹⁰ Klaus-Peter Klaiber, “The NATO-Russia Relationship a Year After Paris,” *NATO Review WEBEDITION*, no. 3, Autumn 1998, 16-19; on-line, Internet, 8 January 1999, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1998/9803-05.htm>. Dr. Klaiber, NATO’s Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, further stated “if NATO had not engaged in the strategic process with Russia, it is doubtful that enlargement would come about.” See Alexander A.C. Gerry, “NATO Enlargement: International Business and Economic Development,” *The Officer*, March 1997, 30.

¹¹ Section II of the Founding Act also outlines three distinct activities of the Council: consultation, developing joint initiatives, and making joint decisions and taking joint action (on a case-by-case basis) under the authority of the UN Security Council or the responsibility of the OSCE. See “Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between NATO and the Russian Federation,” *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>. The US National Security Strategy also declares, “NATO and Russia developed the Permanent Joint Council to enhance political consultation and practical cooperation, while retaining NATO’s decision-making authority. Our shared goal remains constructive Russian participation in the European security system.” *A National Security Strategy For A New Century* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, October 1998), 38.

¹² Since establishment of the Joint Council in Brussels, contact has increased greatly and the flow of information and public diplomacy has been evident. Countless Russian journalists, students and government officials have visited NATO HQ in Brussels over the last few years. In addition, the “North Atlantic Assembly has been playing a crucial role in fostering contacts between the Russian Duma and the legislatures of NATO member states.” Klaiber, 16-19.

¹³ Gerhard Wettig, “Russia and European Security,” *The Officer*, November 1998, 40.

¹⁴ William G. Hyland, “NATO’s Incredible Shrinking Defense,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 38.

¹⁵ Russia says it now has equal vote to the other 16 members of NATO, and that all other power actions of the alliance in excess of lawful defense will have to be agree with Russia first through the council, and then in the UN Security Council and the OSCE. As a result, the West has no free hand to take unilateral steps such as the air strikes on the Bosnian Serbs in 1995. See Stanley Kober, “Russia’s Search for Identity,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 132. In

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addition, Minister of Defense Igor Sergeyev warns against “arbitrarily restricting Russia’s role in the Permanent Joint Council” [meaning, “no veto”]. Sergeyev, 15-18.

¹⁶ William Hyland points out, “the great irony is that the only country that could conceivably pose a threat to NATO will participate in the Alliance’s military planning. And consultations could easily be used to delay, if not halt, further expansion.” Hyland, 38.

¹⁷ Wettig, 40.

¹⁸ At the March 1997 Helsinki summit where the Founding Act was discussed, “so many concessions were made to Moscow by the Clinton administration that we now have an almost lunatic state of affairs: in order to make acceptable the expansion of NATO to contain a potentially dangerous Russia, we are virtually making Russia an honorary member of NATO, with something close to veto power.” Harries, 196.

¹⁹ Kissinger stated it stands counter to the Alliance pledge to protect new members from outside aggression (i.e., the Russian Federation). “A responsible Russian role in the building of international order does not need to be based on Russian de facto participation in the Western defense alliance,” he wrote. “If there is no distinction between members and non-members, what remains of the alliance?” See Kober, 133-134.

²⁰ Alan Tonelson explains, “Moscow will be facing an alliance that has reached its doorstep and rejected the possibility of Russian membership, but one that has also taken extraordinary steps to placate Russia by, in essence, agreeing to expand only on paper. That version of NATO amounts to an alliance willing to antagonize Russia but not to challenge it militarily.” Alan Tonelson, “NATO Expansion: The Triumph of Policy Incoherence,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 46.

²¹ On 22 Jun 95, Senator Nunn appealed for slow motion on NATO expansion, asking “Are we really going to be able to convince the East Europeans that we are protecting them from their historical threats, while we convince the Russians that NATO’s enlargement has nothing to do with Russia as a potential military power?” Solomon, 81.

²² Derek Averre, “NATO Expansion and Russian National Interests,” *European Security* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1998), 39.

²³ Susan Eisenhower, “The Perils of Victory,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 103-104.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

²⁵ In their eyes, there is good reason for this distrust. As Jonathan Dean observes, “the primary reason many members of the Senate today favor NATO enlargement is suspicion of Russia—Russians are right when they conclude that many of those legislators intend the enlargement of NATO as an anti-Russian measure.” Dean, 127.

²⁶ A Russian national security doctrine published in December 1997 calls NATO expansion “unacceptable” and “a threat to national security,” casting some doubt on Moscow’s commitment to the NATO-Russian Founding Act. Ariel Cohen, “Regional Strategies: Russia,” *The Officer*, August 1998, 35).

²⁷ Alexander Lopushinsky argues “the obvious question is, ‘a guarantee against whom or a threat from where?’ The only plausible answer is a guarantee against a threat from Russia. From the Russian perspective, all those nice words about a United Europe and common objectives sound hollow. We are apprehensive that NATO enlargement could trigger the

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creation of a security system in which there would be no real role for Russia. In that sense NATO enlargement contradicts Russia's national interests." Alexander Lopushinsky, "Russia and NATO," *The Officer*, April 1998, 35.

²⁸ For details on statements by Boris Yeltsin, Gennady Zyuganov, Alexander Lebed, and Yevgeny Primakov, see Mendelsohn, n.p. For Igor Sergeyev's viewpoint, see Boris Vinogradov, "Russia Still Feels Uncomfortable In NATO," *Izvestia*, 4 December 1997, 3, in CDPSP XLIX, no. 49, 7 January 1998, 21.

²⁹ Gorbachev's declaration that "any extension of the zone of NATO is unacceptable," and Baker's reply, "I agree," have become one of the most controversial exchanges. "The truth of the matter is that reunification was possible only because of the trust that had developed between Gorbachev and Bush. If Gorbachev had imagined there was a possibility that NATO would eventually move beyond Germany, he never would have agreed to the treaty." Eisenhower, 110.

³⁰ Lebed, one of the leading contenders for President in the 2000 Russian elections, has even called it a "Yalta" without the Russians. He asserted, "the deal on expanding NATO to the east is the second Yalta, but a Yalta without Russia. It sets the sphere of influence of the victors of the Cold War—NATO and the United States. . . . The Soviet Union's agreement to German unification and entry into NATO was qualified by clear undertakings not to expand the bloc's activities to the east. Soviet leaders received assurances to that effect from the leaders of the United States, Britain, France, and the former West Germany." *Ibid.*, 112-113.

³¹ Anatol Lieven asserts "since US foreign policy is increasingly dictated by short-term electoral considerations, and since many US leaders lack any clear conception of what the interests of the United States as a whole . . . actually are, the cards are permanently stacked against Russia. Any move seen as anti-Russian will always earn a certain measure of domestic political credit in the United States. Moves seen as pro-Russian will attract at best indifference and at worst hostility." Anatol Lieven, "The NATO-Russia Accord: An Illusory Solution," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 149.

³² Eisenhower, 109.

³³ Hugh De Santis, "NATO's Manifest Destiny: The Risks of Expansion," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 169.

³⁴ The West "has not managed to produce sound arguments to convince Russia that extending the Alliance to the borders of Russia, to include, perhaps, even former Soviet Republics, corresponds to Russian interests or is in the interests of European security. . . . Russia emphasizes the fact that its vital interests are best served as part of the Euro-Atlantic security system." Lopushinsky, 35-38. In addition, the *Congressional Digest* acknowledges "US efforts to persuade Russia that NATO enlargement in Eastern Europe is not a threat to its interests have not been effective. Moscow continues to warn that good relations will be undermined if NATO is enlarged." See "US Policy: National Security and Foreign Aid," *Congressional Digest*, August-September 1998, 198.

³⁵ The overwhelming majority of the Russian people, "who do not understand the finer points of East-West relations, or understand in detail the extent of cooperation between Russia and the Alliance," view NATO expansion as an act that is historically unjust. They see that while Russia retreated to the east, NATO drives to fill the vacuum. Lopushinsky, 36.

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³⁶ Cohen, 35. Unfortunately, such resentment has been partially bolstered by some reciprocal anti-Russian sentiment in the United States, and especially within elements of the media. Lieven, 147.

³⁷ Eisenhower, 114, and Lieven, 143. In addition, the Russian government lacks legitimacy, and US motives are seen, however mistakenly, as self-interested and unfriendly to Russia. Peter Reddaway, "Pro and Con: Should the United States Maintain its Current Policy Toward Russia? (Con)," *Congressional Digest*, August-September 1998, 215.

³⁸ Eisenhower, 116.

³⁹ Jack Mendelsohn lists several of these: "Continuing NATO's eastern expansion will interfere with these positive trends: it risks chilling the START process, forcing Russia to cling to its tactical nuclear weapons to compensate for conventional military weakness, stressing the CFE Treaty to accommodate potential NATO deployments in the East, and diverting resources from the real problems confronting the Baltics and the countries of the former Warsaw Pact." Jack Mendelsohn, "Tranche Fever," *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>.

⁴⁰ See Jack Mendelsohn, "Crossing the 'Finnish' Line," *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>. See also Spurgeon M. Keeny, Jr. and Jack Mendelsohn, "Arms Control and the Helsinki Summit: Issues and Obstacles in the Second Clinton Term," *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>. Mendelsohn and Cerniello also discuss the impacts of delaying START II ratification on easing Moscow's budgetary and restructuring processes in Jack Mendelsohn and Craig Cerniello, "The Arms Control Agenda At the Helsinki Summit," *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>.

⁴¹ Along with this, "East European states may well get caught up in a political maelstrom of rival candidacies." Dean, 123.

⁴² Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry, eds., *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 6-7. See also Kober, 136-137, and Eisenhower, 114.

⁴³ Lieven asks, "We can't afford to ignore that possibility, or pass it off as implausible, especially with a China growing stronger and asserting itself somewhat more in the region," especially since in a generation or so it "will have the world's largest economy." Lieven, 148.

⁴⁴ In an obvious reference to NATO expansion, Defense Minister Sergeyev stated "Russia's military potential is exclusively aimed at maintaining its own security and poses no threat to other states and nations. Russia is therefore justified in expecting corresponding moves from the other major military powers, and above all from NATO." Sergeyev, 15-18.

⁴⁵ The process of NATO expansion "is predictably putting some very serious and dangerous pressures on Russian nuclear weapons operations, and we have to worry about their reactions. What they've been telling us—and we should listen carefully—is that this is driving them into broad reliance on nuclear weapons to cover virtually all the primary missions. . . . That means that their nuclear weapons operations, which are already basically on a hair trigger policy, get all the more committed to that." Keeny and Mendelsohn, 25.

⁴⁶ Klaiber, 16-19.

⁴⁷ The "nearly total collapse of Russia's offensive military capabilities is undeniable. Moscow has no effective means of projecting military power outside the Russian Federation and

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only a marginal capability to maintain domestic order within it. The Russian debacle in Chechnya is the most obvious example of the present ineffectiveness of the Russian military. Despite that gross failure, Russian president Boris Yeltsin's response has been to continue major reductions in the armed forces and in military spending. The result is a demoralized force that itself is a growing threat to internal stability." Carroll, 199-200.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

NATO's Continuing Relevance

The North Atlantic Alliance is considering another expansion effort much too soon after the first round. Prudence dictates that NATO should pause and consider the ramifications of that first enlargement on its future before rushing into another round without fully contemplating all associated costs. The key question for the Alliance is whether to go beyond its traditional role and try to adapt to a new security environment or maintain its long-time mission and focus on other security structures better suited to today's conflicts and instabilities. Given the evidence presented in this paper, I believe the prudent course is the latter.

By its actions over the past several years, NATO is changing focus from a defensive military alliance to a peacekeeping organization intent on enhancing overall European security. There is no question NATO needs to re-think its traditional collective defense mission and that it should look at the strategic shift from a single-threat situation during the Cold War to a multilateral one now requiring a more capabilities-based approach.¹ However, although NATO may be a Cold War relic, further expansion into Central and Eastern Europe is not an appropriate response to the new international environment.² With another round of expansion, NATO would be taking on even greater commitments than it had during the Cold War when it had significantly more resources than it does today.

It is indeed time for NATO to clarify its new mission, which could include a greater role for the European side of the Alliance through an enhanced WEU or similar organization.³ It should further delineate clearly its military responsibilities and authority and allow political organizations such as the EU to deal primarily with the political business of Europe. It will undoubtedly come up with new priorities in the wake of a defunct Soviet threat. However, with additional enlargement, NATO would become too diluted and unwieldy to be effective, and it would run the risk of becoming an irrelevant paper treaty, incapable of carrying out its primary mission of collective defense.⁴ In the end, NATO should not try to use old structures for new missions, like using an old wineskin for new wine. The Allies should take all due care on this point, for NATO will outline the contours of European security for the next ten years.⁵

Future Challenges

From the US perspective we must keep in mind that we are a global, not European, power. Our goal should be to ensure no single state upsets the regional balance of power.⁶ While it is proper for Europe to take on more responsibilities, we need to remain fully engaged in NATO. However, it is critical to understand what we are committing to: not just contributing troops but pledging to defend other countries.⁷ We must keep our sense of common purpose and vision; otherwise, the Alliance might wither and die or at best lose its continuing relevance for European security. The challenge will be not to change the fundamental goals and direction of NATO, but to work cooperatively with the rest of Europe and Russia to establish or revise other effective security structures. The bottom line for the Alliance is that NATO must maintain its military effectiveness; otherwise, it is merely another loose organization of troops and equipment with no real effectiveness in today's or tomorrow's world.

The United States should clearly outline its strategic foreign policy goals on this issue, and chart a straight course to accomplish these goals.⁸ The next step is an honest and robust debate to find a solution to these troublesome problems. It is imprudent at best and dangerous at worst to use a collective defense organization to do what NATO is trying to do, especially when there are other viable solutions. The path we are on toward another enlargement demands serious re-consideration with a full public debate and Congressional scrutiny.⁹ In the end, the conclusion should be that the most recent round of NATO expansion must be its last.

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¹ Rob de Wijk, "Towards a New Political Strategy for NATO," *NATO Review WEBEDITION*, no. 2, Summer 1998, 14-18; on-line, Internet, 8 January 1999, available from <http://www.nato.int/docu/review/1998/9802-05.htm>.

² Ronald Steel, "Beyond NATO," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 250.

³ Jonathan Dean, "NATO Enlargement: Coping with Act II," in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 127.

⁴ The question is "only secondarily one of admitting Central European lands into NATO. The primary question is whether NATO will soon be anything more than a paper alliance, with or without new members. What will NATO's military capability be like in a few years? What will it be sufficient for? . . . The Rio Pact works just fine—because it doesn't have to do anything. The question is whether NATO will have any more substance than the Rio Pact does today, a paper alliance that has fallen into disuse." Michael G. Roskin, "NATO: The Strange Alliance Getting Stranger," *Parameters*, Summer 1998, 38.

⁵ Alexander A.C. Gerry, "Eurasian Security in an Era of NATO Enlargement," *The Officer*, October 1997, 23.

⁶ Steel, 251.

⁷ Proponents of enlargement "must show why the nations of Central and Eastern Europe are so important to America's security and well-being that US leaders are justified in putting not only the lives of American troops but the existence of American cities at risk. Advocates of enlargement sometimes act as though a bigger NATO is merely an institutional mechanism whereby everyone can gather in the center of Europe for a group hug. It is not. It is an unnecessary, expensive, and provocative initiative with perilous implications. The only question is whether NATO enlargement will turn out to be a farce or a tragedy." Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry, eds, *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 28.

⁸ Jack Mendelsohn, "Tranche Fever," *NATO Homepage*, n.p.; on-line, Internet, 13 October 1998, available from <http://www.nato.int/welcome/home/htm>.

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⁹ Otherwise, we run the risk of “creating a transatlantic monstrosity worthy of Mary Shelley. The Atlantic alliance is being buried. In its place, NATO, led by the [United States], is stitching together a Frankensteinian horror: a military alliance with no clear enemy, a military alliance with rapidly diminishing capabilities but expanding geographical commitments, a military alliance that can no longer credibly defend its members, a military alliance that will degenerate into little more than a political club of first- and second-class members plus a list of applicants that may never be allowed to join.” William G. Hyland, “NATO’s Incredible Shrinking Defense,” in *NATO Enlargement: Illusions and Reality*, eds. Ted G. Carpenter and Barbara Conry (Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998), 31.

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